



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Oklahoma Named as 2023 State Trade Expansion Program Awardee by SBA**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – The U.S. Small Business Administration recently announced that \$350,000 in competitive grant funding has been awarded to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce through the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant program to help companies increase their exporting capabilities. This funding has helped hundreds of small businesses in Oklahoma to increase their export sales by covering a percentage of costs associated with entering international markets.

“The intent of this program is to increase the number of small businesses that are exporting, and to increase the value of exports for those small businesses that are currently exporting,” said Nicole Boyles, State Director for International Trade and Exports, Oklahoma Department of Commerce. “This funding from the SBA is a critical component in our overall Export & Trade program in Oklahoma. The STEP grant funds we’ve received help us to build the capacity of current and future small business exporters to compete in the global marketplace and expand their customer base outside of the U.S.”

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce will be accepting applications starting October 1 from eligible Oklahoma companies interested in utilizing STEP funds to start or expand exporting activities. Exporting activities that are eligible for grant funding include: exhibiting in a trade show, participating in a Commerce led foreign trade mission, website translation services, U.S. Commercial Services matchmaking programs and attending export training workshops.

“We know that exporting allows companies to tap into new markets and customers, increase sales, and capitalize on growth opportunities. With 85% of the state’s businesses qualifying as small businesses, being able to provide the necessary export and trade services to these companies is a critical component in our efforts to diversify the economy,” said Hopper Smith, Brigadier General, ARNG (Ret.), Interim Executive Director of Commerce. “Our team is dedicated to supporting these companies and growing the number of Oklahoma companies that export – which benefits both Oklahoma’s economy and each individual business.”

For more information on the STEP grant available through the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, visit [www.okcommerce.gov/step](http://www.okcommerce.gov/step).

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